

Appln. No.: 10/651,911
Amendment Dated: April 10, 2007
Reply to Office Action dated March 13, 2007

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

What is claimed is:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (Canceled)
6. (Canceled)
7. (Canceled)
8. (Canceled)
9. (Canceled)
10. (Canceled)

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A method utilizing a computer for generating a list of information sources having an estimated value to a user wherein at least one information source is present comprising the steps of:

- a) receiving fixed information for each of a plurality of users;
- b) initializing profiles for each of said users in ~~said~~ a user profile database with said fixed information;
- c) receiving monitored information relating to activities of a user;
- d) determining if said monitored information relates to a particular information source and, if so, determine a value rating associated with said user for said particular information source in accordance with said monitored information;
- e) creating an updated profile for said user in said user profile database in accordance with said monitored information;
- f) if a value rating is determined, associating said value rating with said updated user profile and recording said value rating in a related value rating database; and
- g) determining if ~~said~~ a list is to be generated; and if so
 - g1) calculating an estimated value to said user of an information source as a function of said user's profile, profiles for others of said users, and value ratings for said information source associated with said other users profiles;
 - g2) repeating step g1 until estimated values have been calculated for all of said information sources;
 - g3) selecting and outputting to said user, or saving for later output, information sources having estimated values so that said user receiving the list of information sources will have a quantative estimate of the likely value of each of the sources.

13. (Original) A method as described in claim 12 where said estimated value is calculated as:

$$E_{i,n} = \sum_x (S_{x,n} \cdot V_{i,x}) / X$$

where;

- a) $E_{i,n}$ is the estimated value to user n of information source i in accordance with the values and interests of user n as indicated by user n's current updated profile P_n ;
- b) coefficients $S_{x,n}$ are a measure of similarity between a profile P_x of another user x and said profile P_n ;
- c) $V_{i,x}$ is a value rating for said information source i associated with said profile P_x ;
- d) \sum_x indicates summation over all profiles P_x for which $V_{i,x}$ is defined; and
- e) X is the total number of profiles P_x .

14. (Original) A method as described in claim 13 where, as data is accumulated in said databases, statistical methods are used to adjust said coefficients $S_{x,n}$.

15. (Original) A method as described in claim 12 where said estimated value is calculated as:

$$E_{i,n} = \sum_k C_{i,k} \cdot Z_{k,n}$$

where;

- a) $E_{i,n}$ is an estimated value to user n of information source i in accordance with the values and interests of said user n as indicated by said user n's profile P_n ;
- b) $C_{i,k}$ are coefficients generated using linear regression methods and relating said information source i to kth variables in profiles;
- c) $Z_{k,n}$ is the value of said kth variable in said profile P_n ; and
- d) \sum_k indicates summation over all values of k.

16. (Original) A method as described in claim 15 where, as data is accumulated in said databases, linear regression methods are used to adjust said coefficients $C_{i,k}$.

17. (Original) A method as described in claim 12 where said estimated value is calculated by:

- a) generating a neural network associated with information source i;
- b) training said network using values $Z_{k,x}$ and $V_{i,x}$ from profiles in a set $\{P_x\}$ of profiles for other users x, and for which values $V_{i,x}$ are defined;
- c) determining $E_{i,n}$ by applying $Z_{k,n}$ to said network; where
- d) $E_{i,n}$ is an estimated value to user n of information source i in accordance with the values and interests of said user n as indicated by said user n's profile P_n ;
- e) $Z_{k,n}$ is the value of said kth variable in said profile P_n ; and
- c) $V_{i,x}$ is a value rating for said information source i associated with a profile in said set $\{P_x\}$.

18. (Original) A method as described in claim 17 where, as data is accumulated in said databases, said network is further trained.

19. (Original) A method as described in claim 12 where said calculating step is carried out using said user's current, updated profile P_n^+ .

20. (Original) A method as described in claim 12 where said information source is in contact with another user.

21. (Original) A method as described in claim 20 where said estimated value is calculated as:

$$EFC_{n,x} = 1 / \sum_k (W_{n,k}(Z_{k,x} - Z_{k,n})^2)$$

where;

- a) $EFC_{n,x}$ is an estimate of the fruitfulness of contact with other user x by user n;

- b) $W_{n,k}$ are coefficients provided by said user n;
- c) $Z_{k,n}$ is the value of a kth variable in said user n's profile P_n ;
- d) $Z_{k,x}$ is the value of a kth variable in said other user x's profile P_x ; and
- e) \sum_k indicates summation over all values of k.

22. (Original) A method as described in claim 21 where said other user x can select either a private or a public status and will only be included in said list if he or she selects said public status.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

- a) a server;
- b) a profile database;
- c) a value rating database;
- d) said server communicating with a profile database and a value rating database;
- e) said server also communicating with a plurality of monitors for monitoring a corresponding plurality of users;
- f) said server being programmed to:
 - f1) receive fixed information for each of a plurality of users;
 - f2) initialize profiles for each of said users in said profile database with said fixed information;
 - f3) monitor a user and receive monitored information relating to said user;
 - f4) determine if said monitored information relates to a particular information source wherein at least one particular information sources is present and, if so, determine a value rating for said particular information source in accordance with said monitored information;

f5) create an updated profile for said user in said profile database in accordance with said monitored information;

f6) if a value rating is determined, associate said value rating with said updated user profile and record ~~said a~~ value rating in said related value rating database; and

f7) determine if ~~said a~~ list is to be generated; and if so

f7A) calculate an estimated value to said user of an information source as a function of said user's profile, profiles for others of said users, and value ratings for said information source associated with said other users profiles;

f7B) repeat step f7A until estimated values have been calculated for all of said information sources; and

f7C) select and output to said user, or save for later output, information sources having estimated values so that said user receiving the information sources will have a quantative estimate of the likely value of each of the sources.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Currently Amended) A method utilizing a computer readable storage medium having embedded instructions for providing instructions to a server, said instructions controlling said server to perform the steps of:

a) receiving fixed information for each of a plurality of users;

b) initializing profiles for each of ~~said a~~ users in said user profile database with said fixed information;

c) monitoring a user and receive monitored information relating to said user;

d) determining if said monitored information relates to a particular information source wherein at least one particular information sources is present and, if so, determine a value rating for said particular information source in accordance with said monitored information;

e) creating an updated profile for ~~said~~a user in said profile database in accordance with said monitored information;

f) if a value rating is determined, associating said value rating with said updated user profile and record ~~said~~a value rating in said related value rating database; and

g) determining if ~~said~~a list is to be generated; and if so

g1) calculating an estimated value to said user of an information source as a function of said user's profile, profiles for others of said users, and value ratings for said information source associated with said other users profiles;

g2) repeating step g1 until estimated values have been calculated for all of said information sources; and

g3) selecting and output to said user, or save for later output, information sources having estimated values so that said user receiving the information sources will have a quantative estimate of the likely value of each of the sources.